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AUTHOR Hughes, James W.
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ABSTRACT

Studying about non-Western cultures not only helps children enjoy the differences that exist among people, but also prepares youth for meeting change in life. It is suggested that cultural awareness and appreciation by American pupils transfer to and affect the African's self-concept and image. Being a developing nation resembling American at a former period, with similarities in the historical development such as nationalism, Kenya offers topics for cross-cultural study. Suggestions on topics of interest for teaching about Kenya in the primary and intermediate grades focus on the people and their ways of living. Primary students can study about the ways children in Kenya work together through "Harambee" to assist in national building by planting school gardens to help defray school costs, by teaching others and by participating in worthwhile youth services. Other topics to be studied are how the National Anthem of Kenya was chosen, and the meaning of the national holidays of Kenya. Values which Kenyans hold dear offer study for intermediate grades. Nationalistic pride in being Kenyan, respect and consideration for others, and group cooperation form value bases of Kenya culture which American youngsters can appreciate. Lastly, five resources offering information about helpful materials for studying Kenya are presented. A related document is SO 003 207. (SJM)

(Teaching about Kenya in the Elementary School)

Hughes, James W.

Dear Fellow Teachers,

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Studying about Kenya in the primary grades can be a very exciting experience for your youngsters. Having spent over two years working and living in Kenya, enabled me to acquire experiences and insights which might be helpful to you, should you wish to have your class study about Kenya. Let me share some of these thoughts with you.

Why Study About Kenya? - Ngali, a ninety-year old Kenyan, had this to say on my last visit to his farm:

"I have known the days of the slavers in East Africa.

I lived through the days of the British colonialists.

I helped in the fight for Kenya's independence.

And now I welcome a White man into my home as a brother to my son.

Yes, I have lived through many changes in Kenya during my lifetime.

But I worry about my Grandson. What great changes will he live through?

With Africa and the world changing so rapidly, will my Grandson be able

to cope with all these changes and still live a happy and productive life?"

This Mzee's (wise old man) concern for his grandson's future, as expressed to me during my work in Kenya, is a parental concern which knows no national or cultural boundaries. As parents and teachers throughout the world, we too share such concerns for our youth. In the United States we use our Social Studies curriculum as a means of helping our youth to come to grips with changes in life, and through aspects of the Social Sciences provide skills by which youth may live happily with themselves and with others. Studying about other cultures in the

primary grades may very well be one excellent approach in assisting our youngsters to enjoy the differences that exist among people throughout the world, as well as prepare youth for constant change, which is a critical component for living happily in these rapidly changing days.

Studying about Kenya in the primary grades may also provide a more positive appreciation for a Non-western culture. The nations of Africa will certainly play a more dominant role in the international political sphere of the future, and our youth need to have more of a feeling for this spectacular continent and its people. Studying about Kenya may also enable our White students to develop a greater understanding and appreciation for a Black culture, and our Black students may develop a more positive self-image, and pride and respect while dealing with this significant cultural nation of East Africa. Since Kenya is a nation currently undergoing very drastic and rapid changes, it is an excellent topic for cross-cultural study in the primary grades. Americans may also see certain similarities in historical development of Kenya as an independent nation, and thus have more interest and understanding of Kenya as a topic in the Social Studies curriculum of our schools. Kenya also represents such gross contrasts and differences in all aspects of the Social Sciences, that it is an excellent topic to use in helping break down the "American misconceptions and stereotypes" about Africa.

A WORD OF CAUTION - Elsa, the Lioness, Daktari, African Cowboy, and many other film and TV presentations have helped our youngsters to become more aware of the magnificent game parks of East Africa. Many primary teachers capitalize upon this knowledge and interest of youth to pursue unit studies of wildlife in Africa. Nothing against such studies, but if one has limited time and minimal knowledge of African topics, initial exposure to a cultural group might have

more positive effects if the study FIRST concentrated on the people and their ways of living, as opposed to the animals that roam the game parks. Little change in attitudes and cultural awareness towards the people of Africa seem to occur from a study of the animals of Africa.

Suggestions for teaching about Kenya in the primary grades - (Picture - A Kenyon Family)

Teach about contemporary Kenya and its nation-building efforts. Example:

1. The Spirit of Harambee - "Harambee" is a Kiswahili word which means "we must all pull together". The spirit of Harambee symbolizes the people's attitude and effort in helping to build and strengthen their new nation. The government encourages people to help themselves and their neighbors in bettering their ways of living, and not wait until a government agency tries to do it for them. Everyone must work together to make the nation strong in as brief a time period as possible. Therefore the slogan "Harambee" is used by young and old in the many self-help projects such as the building of roads, bridges, children's nurseries, community centers, school buildings, and medical facilities. Since nation building is a responsibility for ALL the people of Kenya, it might be interesting to your children to study about the ways children in Kenya work together through "Harambee" to assist in nation building. For instance:

A. School gardens: Many schools have large plots of farm land which the children help cultivate after school hours between 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm. When the crops are harvested, the children sell the food produce in the markets, and the money earned is used to help pay for the cost of school supplies such as notebooks, pencils, paper, etc. In this way children do not have to ask parents for extra money in order to maintain themselves while they are students in school. Thus by helping themselves, they help in nation building. (Picture - Spirit of Harambee)

B. Teaching Others: Not all children in Kenya are able to attend primary school. Schools at this time are not free, and not all families are able to afford to send all their children to school. Therefore, those youngsters who are able to go to school are expected to share their knowledge with other children and elders. In this way, at least some gains in literacy may occur with the non-school children. Also, since schools cost money, and families must work hard for the cash to send (Picture - A student teaches non-students) children to school, the school children are expected to work hard, behave, and be the best possible students. Thus by being knowledgeable students, they will be better able to use that knowledge to later help Kenya's development. (Picture - Children in school work hard)

C. National Youth Service: This is a government agency which enlists young men and women of high school age for self-help project work. Most of these young people have attended primary school, but have not been able to attend a secondary school. Therefore, the National Youth Service sponsors self-help projects which use the services of those people. In so doing, it helps the young people to learn a trade and be self-reliant, patriotic, and dedicated to the development of Kenya as a nation.

D. "Bob-a-Job Day": The Boy Scout movement is very popular in Kenya, as it is in many parts of the world. The government of Kenya encourages its youth to partake in these worthwhile youth activities. But as we all know, Scouting costs a little money for uniforms, trips, etc. Therefore in the spirit of "Harambee", Scouts sponsor a work day for all Scouts in the country. They call this day "Bob-a-Job Day". ("Bob" is the slang expression for Kenyan coin, a shilling. The Kenyan shilling is worth approximately fourteen cents in U.S.A. currency.) On this work day, Scouts offer to do any job one tells them to do,

and the fee required for the job is just one shilling. Scouts try to do as many jobs as possible on this day, thus earning as many shillings ("Bobs") as possible. People and business firms cooperate with the Scouts on this day since it is a very positive way for Scouts to help themselves, thus being good Harambee workers in Kenya.

E. "Harambee Song": Kenya has a patriotic song called "Harambee" which is usually sung by workers during a "Harambee" project. The song is a very happy, spirited song telling about the need for everyone to work together to make Kenya a strong nation. The song is available on 45 LP from the Equatorial Sound Studios Ltd., P.O. Box 18113, Nairobi, Kenya. The lyrics are in Kiswahili, and no doubt the company could provide you with sheet music giving an English translation as well. Your children might enjoy hearing and learning this patriotic song of Kenya. (Picture - Parliament Bldg.)

11. The National Anthem of Kenya - In addition to their driving spirit of nationalism, Kenya has its symbols of nationalism as well. It is often interesting to learn how some nations acquired their particular symbols. Kenya, for instance has a very interesting story behind the selection of its' national anthem. In essence, the children of Kenya played an important role in the final selection of the National Anthem of Kenya. Here is that true story:

In 1963, President-elect Kenyatta appointed a Commission of Five to write or select a song for the nation's National Anthem, which would be played on their first Independence Day celebration, December 12, 1963. The Commission finally submitted three songs to the President-elect for consideration as national anthems. Mr. Kenyatta asked the Army Band to play the three songs for him and his appointed Cabinet Ministers. President-elect Kenyatta also invited the neighboring schools to send the children to his outdoor pavillion so they could witness the selection of the National Anthem. Hundreds of school children were there when the Army Band played the three songs. The President-elect and his Cabinet Ministers all voted

on the songs. When the votes were counted, two of the three songs had tied for first place. Mr. Kenyatta asked the Band to play the two songs a second time. Again the Ministers voted, and again it was a tie vote. At this moment, Mr. Kenyatta turned to the hundreds of school children attending the ceremony and asked them to decide between the two songs. The children cheered in favor of one, a song based on a Coastal (Pokomo) tribal lullaby. So in reality, children of Kenya helped select their nation's National Anthem. The Anthem has words in both Kiswahili and English. Your children might enjoy hearing the Anthem, as well as participating in a variety of art-related and creative dramatic-type activities depicting this selection event. The song is available on 45 LP from Shanderdass Ltd., P.O. Box 43, Nairobi, Kenya. It is also available from Assanands, P.O. Box 377, Government Road, Nairobi, Kenya. Another interesting patriotic song you might like to acquire at the same time is "Haicia Bendera", an Equator Records, and available from any of the previously mentioned sources. This song tells of President Jomo Kenyatta's leadership in acquiring independence for Kenya, and he is praised and remembered as the flag is raised.

II. National Holidays of Kenya:

A. Jamhuri Day: December 12th, is Kenya's Independence Day. It might be interesting for your children to learn about Kenya's struggle and eventual success in achieving independence. Kenya's story in this vein is not unlike early U.S. colonial times. Teachers can acquire an excellent background on this from the paperback book, East African Nations by John Osogo. The booklet is only one hundred-fifteen pages in length and covers the East African story in very current, accurate fashion. Mr. Osogo is a well-known educator in Kenya, and has written several African history books. You can depend on his material presenting content

in a very thorough, readable, and interesting manner. The booklet costs approximately \$2.00 and is available through Equatorial Publishers Ltd., P.O. Box 7973, Nairobi, Kenya. You might be interested in acquiring this Company's booklist as it specializes in material by African authors about African topics.

B. Kenyatta Day: October 20th, commemorates the day on which Jomo Kenyatta was arrested by the colonial government for his alleged involvement with Mau Mau uprising. To the Kenyan people, it signifies the peoples' demand for freedom and independence. Much of Mr. Osogo's book covers this encounter as well. (Picture -

C. Tree Day: On May 1st children are asked to plant trees in barren areas, and help maintain the practice positive conservation measures which will protect and increase the nations forest reserves. Much has been destroyed through poor agricultural practices in the past, and the nation is trying to foster more positive conservation and preservation practices among its people. Tree Day serves to honor this nations concern and priority.

Suggestions for Teaching about Kenya in the Intermediate Grades - STRESS VALUES

As our children become more familiar with different cultural groups around the world, it is important for us as teachers to stress those values which a cultural group holds dear. Often times it is easier for our youngsters to appreciate a cultural group when they understand the value base of that cultural group. Such understanding and empathy may help lead our youth to accepting differing ways of life, and thus appreciate both the differences and similarities of another cultural group through an understanding of their values. At the intermediate level, I like to encourage teachers to select content about a cultural group under study which illustrates the values of high priority within that cultural group. Let me suggest a few values, and their reflective topics relative to Kenya which

might be helpful to you in planning your teaching unit on this nation. These values are not unlike many values held by other cultural groups; some of which are represented within the boundaries of our nation, and which might provide interesting consideration for our youngsters.

PRIDE - Though Kenya has only been an independent nation since 1963, the government and its people place a high value upon being a Kenyan. Examples of this pride can be seen almost everywhere. (1) Every store and public place displays both the national flag and a picture of the President, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. Many private homes display the same symbols to represent their pride in being a Kenyan citizen. (2) National holidays are celebrated with great patriotic enthusiasm at all levels; village, town, county, province. (3) The National Anthem is played before every movie and theatrical performance. (4) Competitions are held periodically to encourage the creation and continuation of "national dress". (5) Kenyan citizens are given first preference to job opportunities and store licensing.

Certainly many ethnic groups within our homeland stress "pride" as an important value. The non-fictional history of the American Indian as explained in the book, Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee gives numerous accounts of the importance of "pride" to Indian tribal groups. "Black is Beautiful" certainly is evidence of the importance placed upon "pride" to contemporary American Blacks. Dress and hair fashions which represent both the Black Americans cultural heritage and natural beauty help create a deep feeling of "pride" for this important population in our own country. The importance finally being recognized by Non-blacks to the cultural heritage of the Chicano and other groups have placed "pride" high on the list of values to be stressed by many in dealing with cross-cultural studies. Teachers can find numerous incidents of this value trait within many ethnic groups no doubt, which children can relate to locally as well as abroad.

CONSIDERATION AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS - One only has to know a Kenyan family briefly to witness the great warmth and respect demonstrated within the family unit. Such a study for our children would show the importance placed upon respect for the elders, the concern for family and tribal councils to help make decisions, and the critical role each family member plays in participating in the mutual happiness of the family through respect and consideration. Another approach to see illustrations of this value would be to consider the religious freedom and appreciation for "differences" within the nation of Kenya. Moslems, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Animists all contribute a great deal to the religious preferences of the Kenyan people. The nation encourages its people to maintain respect for one's own traditional beliefs and practices and allows others to retain and practice their traditional ways with pride. Kenya's population is composed of many very different tribal groups. Their songs, dress, customs, dance, all vary quite extensively. Yet the people enjoy their "differences" and in so doing, stress the value of respect and consideration for others.

One only has to ride a subway at rush hour, or shop at the supermarket on a Saturday morning, or supervise lunchroom duty, or attend a faculty meeting on a late Thursday afternoon to wonder what ever happened to THAT value in our culture! True, not everyone is guilty. But certainly we can do more at home to help children understand and appreciate that value within cultural groups at home as well as abroad. The NAACP, the National Urban League, Civic Councils, and many other agencies might be cited as examples of efforts by mixed groups to stress such a value. I recall my hometown days when such organizations as the Italo Balbo Club, the Pulaski Hall, St. Basil's Society tried to foster greater respect, not only for the Italians, Polish, and Russian ethnic groups, but all ethnic groups in the area.

COOPERATION - The idea of "harambee" in Kenya (as previously discussed in this article) is an excellent example of the high priority Kenya's place upon the value of "cooperation". Such projects as school buildings, social halls, road projects, hospitals and others have all been developed through mutual cooperation of the people. Kenya's willingness to be a good neighbor to Tanzania and Uganda through mutual cooperation is evidenced in the East African Community efforts. Kenya is also an active member in Pan Africanism, and has a major role in the OAU (Organization for African Unity). Kenya also feels its responsibility to cooperate with the entire world and has been happy to actively participate in the United Nations. Such examples of cooperation are numerous in studying about Kenya. Cooperation has always been a major characteristic of traditional tribal life among the many people of Kenya, and this great trait has been institutionalized in the nation's contemporary practices.

How has cooperation helped us in America to make a better way of life for cultural groups here? Look what happened in Montgomery when Rosa Parks said, "NO!". Boycotts conducted by the NAACP showed what "cooperation" could do to bring about a better way of life for some people. Consider the sit-ins, the marches, the demonstrations, and remember that it all required "cooperation".

Certainly one could go on and on examining the value base of a culture, and relating it to various groups or movements at home. The potential is limitless, depending upon the background knowledge, interest, and feeling that a teacher has for the topic under consideration. I hope a few of these ideas have started you thinking about the possibilities pertinent to your own local community, region, and its ethnic groups.

ANOTHER WORD OF CAUTION - Don't forget to identify and teach those social studies skills which must be provided for in order to avoid misleading children into stereotyping and misconceptions. Too often we only cover content, and assume the child acquires the skills by osmosis. Let me give you one example of a lack of skill-teaching which resulted in misconceptions at the intermediate level.

While teaching a unit on the geography of Africa, a teacher failed to make specific provision for teaching map-reading skills. She stressed "heat; and proximity to the Equator", and thus many children when asked to describe the climate of Africa would say, "Hot and jungle". Of course this is a popular MISCONCEPTION. However, it would be very difficult for a youngster to glean such an impression of Africa from viewing a map. If the youngster had been taught to read the legend of a physical relief map, a youngster would recognize the vast areas of savannah regions which dominate the continent, and note as well the areas of high elevation, especially along the eastern region of this vast continent. If a youngster was taught to "read" and "infer" from a map, a child might have a very different interpretation of the climate and topography of Africa.

True, map reading won't eliminate all one's teaching problems, but it is a simple example of one type of social studies skill that is necessary for children to learn in dealing with diverse cultural groups of the world. As teachers in the classroom, we must be ever sensitive to children's perceptions of the world and its people, and try in our teaching to present as broad and balanced a coverage as possible to prevent misleading children into unrealistic impressions and attitudes of people different from themselves.

HELPFUL TEACHING MATERIALS FOR STUDYING ABOUT KENYA

A. The Embassy at Kenya, 1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 920, Washington, D.C., 20009 is an excellent source of materials for teacher-reference,

as well as for young people to pursue and study. Depending on availability, the Embassy can make pictures, films, and other useful audio visual material. Their film "Kenya-69" is very good. Such a source is critical to consider in locating appropriate teaching aids. One can depend more upon an Embassy for having up-to-date material. It will also be presented from the host country's point of view. Too often our own publishing houses have only material which reflect a European conception of African events.

B. East African Publishing House, P.O.Box 30571 Kolnange Street, Nairobi, Kenya is an excellent source of children's materials for studying about Kenya. This particular publishing house has specialized in material written by Kenyan authors. One can find an enormous collection of authentic Kenyan and East African Folklore, in paperback style at very inexpensive rates. The material is not as rigidly graded as is typical of most United States publishing house material, but can be an excellent source of material to be read to children, and/or by them, depending on the ability of your children. The Publisher will gladly send you an up-to-date list of publications, both for youth and adults.

C. The East African Literature Bureau, sponsored by the East African Community is another excellent source of teacher-reference and children's materials. Their list of publications can be obtained by writing to the E.S.A. Bookshop, Box 30167, Nairobi, Kenya.

D. Oxford University Press, (in East Africa) P.O. Box 12532, Nairobi, Kenya is another excellent source of material about Kenya, and East Africa, by Kenyan authorship and viewpoint. Their U.S. distributors can no doubt assist one in obtaining lists of publications.

E. The resource and curriculum guide, Africa South of the Sahara by Barry K. Beyer is also a very useful source for information about material available locally, as well. This can be obtained from the Thomas Cromwell Co., 201 Park Avenue, S., New York, New York 10003.

F. Nogle and Nogle's African Studies Program materials are an excellent source for teacher reference. Their thin paperbacks are rather comprehensively enlightening. (Picture - working together helps build a strong nation)

SUMMARY - In planning the initial draft of this article, I first concerned myself with a series of specific activities for teachers to use in teaching about Kenya in the public schools. However, as I worked with teachers attempting to use them, I discovered that most teachers were lacking sufficient depth knowledge of topics dealing with Africa which they could apply to activity-related events in their classes. My anxieties and frustrations forced me to shelve that approach in this article. My major concern now is dealing with teachers who are interested in helping their students to learn about Kenya and centers upon the identification of appropriate topical approaches that a teacher can use which will enable children to question, investigate, discover, inquire, and appreciate the differences and similarities of a people which cross-cultural studies can affect. Most good elementary teachers are sensitive to teaching strategies that are effective with cross-cultural studies already a part of their social studies program. These teaching techniques can easily be transferred, methodologically speaking, in studying about Kenya. Problems seem to focus upon our lack of depth knowledge of contemporary African nations which a teacher and class can use for depth study. Therefore, I encourage you to learn more about modern African nations, and apply your good teaching strategies into situational opportunities which will help your youngsters to appreciate the magnificent people and life in the nations of Africa. If I can be of any further assistance in directing you more specifically to topics, materials, suggestions, etc. please do not hesitate to write directly to me. My address is: James W. Hughes, School of Education, P.O.Box 710, Oakland University, - Rochester, Michigan 48063.

Good luck to you and your class,

Jim Hughes

James W. Hughes